

Dear Chairs Senator McCrory, Representative Currey, and members of the housing committee:

My name is Michelle Garcia and I am a resident of Bridgeport, Connecticut. I am testifying in support of S.B. 1095: An Act Concerning the Use of School Resource Officers In Connecticut Schools.

All students deserve to feel safe, secure and supported in their places of learning. Yet too often our schools rely on policing to keep children in line, rather than funding professionals trained to deliver students necessary developmental and behavioral health resources.

Funding for schools should be used with the best interest of students in mind. Having SROs in schools goes against that very notion. Now more than ever, mental health has been at the forefront of conversations in and outside of schools. The new variants of stress for students have changed with society and the age of social media. Having trained professionals who could help students navigate their feelings and emotional needs would greatly enhance their lives rather than the involvement of an SRO.

It is a stark reality that most students affected by SROs are black and brown. Violence is a systemic issue stemming from a decades-long history of repression, including the removal of financial and educational resources to the most impacted communities. We must do better for our students and hope that with your understanding we could achieve a safer and equitable education system.

According to research by [Connecticut Voices for Children](#), there's no evidence School Resource Officers (SROs) make students or staff safer, but schools with SROs have more arrests and more expulsions than their peer institutions without SROs.

I strongly support S.B. 1095. I hope the Committee and Connecticut lawmakers will vote in favor of this bill. Together, we can build an educational system that is centered on the social-emotional well-being of students through care, resources, learning, and restoration. I would also like to encourage you all to support the recommendations outlined in S.B. 119 in order to make this bill even stronger.

Thank you for your time,

Michelle